

Baba Tyag Mal, rechristened Tegh Bahadur—Hero-of-the-Sword by his Guru Father, Guru Hargobind (1595-1644), when the youngman proved his chivalrous gladiatorial skill during the course of the defensive battle at Kartarpur against the Mughal general Painede Khan; in fact, a traitor and renegade from the Guru's army joining the Imperial forces; and later Guru Tegh Bahadur at the age of nearly 44 years when he ascended the spiritual throne of Guru Nanak on giving a solid witness of his, *Takhat bahey takhtey kay laaik*—throne befits the capable only—on the demise of Guru Hari Krishan, the eighth Sikh Master on March 30, 1664 at Delhi—now Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, with the latter's last cabbalistic utterance "BABA BAKA-LAY"; was born in his ancestral home *Guru-Ke-Mahal, Chaurasti Ataari, Amritsar*. He was the last of the six divine children, five brothers and one sister.

This was almost fifteen years after his Guru Grandfather, Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1605), the fifth Sikh Master, trail-blazer of the infinite line of supreme sacrifice in the Sikh faith, suffered martyrdom on May 30, 1606 in Lahore at the place now known as Gurdwara Dehra Sahib after infinite physical inhuman tortures under the cruel dictat of emperor Jehangir's inexorable pent up bent of religious intolerance, within the very first year of, so to say, snatching (since he surreptitiously made short shrift of his royal father Akbar by poisoning him) the reins of the imperial throne on October 24, 1605 and pressure of his ill-counsellors, followers of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi Naqashbandi—Mujaddad Alif Saani (1564-1624), charging Guru Sahib with promotion of *Kufar* and inducing Jehangir's correlegionists to abjure the faith of his Prophet. The wily Sirhindi vehemently reproached the use of reason and ethics in matters of faith—"As the Prophet is the vehicle of God and commands received from him are equivalent to obedience to God".

Somehow none of the five sons of Guru Hargobind succeeded him to his seat of pontificate. Babas Gurditta, Atal Rai and Ani Rai had passed away earlier. By-passing Babas Suraj Mal and Tegh Bahadur, Guru Hargobind seated his grandson Hari Rai as his successor. As per Dr. Gopal Singh's statement Baba Suraj Mal was found to be much too involved in the world and Baba Tegh Bahadur to be practically a recluse. And under instruction of his divine father, Baba Tegh Bahadur repaired for

Guru Tegh Bahadur

His Virtues And Bani

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village Bakala, his mother's parental home and passed nearly quarter of a century in elective seclusion in deep meditation seated in a *Bhora-Hujra*—a secluded room—rarely coming out, till he was Providentially made successful to hold, as earlier mentioned, as the ninth Guru of the faith. In fact it was never less significant an event than Sri Ram Chandra's exile for fourteen years from Ayodhya and his divine consort Mata Gujri's isolation from her spouse less important, than Mata Sita's privation in hazardous forests.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's entire life was a trail of trials and trysts with a truant fate even to the point of his murder by Dhirmal and his ruffian accomplice Shihan at Bakala till he suffered martyrdom heroically at the hands of Aurangzeb on November 11, 1675 in Chandni Chauk, Delhi, now Gurdwara Sis Ganj, for the protection of *Tilak* and *Janju*—facial mark and the sacred thread of Hindus which were being forcibly effaced and snatched by the Mughal Ruler to spread the faith of his Prophet. Aurangzeb, and even all Muslim rulers of *Puneya Bhumi Bharat* including their fanatic theologians, strongly believed in the principle of *cajus regio-ejus religio* i.e., whose the region, his the religion—*Jatha Raja-Tatha Parja*—or that the established religion should be that of the prince in each state. They claimed to be answerable not only for the physical welfare of the subjects but also for the *Nijjat*—salvation of their souls, depending, of course, on the Prophet's recommendation on the Day-of-Judgement.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was an embodiment of virtues. He was a true *Brahmagyani*. Drab dross and glistening gold were same to him. He was a householder, yet like a lotus he was undrenched in the ocean of Maya. Divine virtues of cosmic love, universal tolerance, self-effacement, true renunciation, fearlessness, spiritual transcendence, sense of *Satyagraha* for uprooting unrighteousness were his significant traits in life. Though an apparent pessimist when peeped through his Baani, yet he was a dynamic optimist in action. His deep lamentations are, in fact, a goad and urge to regenerate devotion and

sunken faith in man. His utterances show a height of simplicity, yet they are replete with meaningfulness. They are inspired, spontaneous unlaboured efforts in search of Truth that course through the inner core of man imparting the cool sense of contentment, comfort and peace purging the delusive sense of *Sabha-Dukha*. They are rare gems of ethical and spiritual value. They are drops of merciful rain from the invisible regions of heaven that make whole every arid and broken personality with the mystic and healing touch. They are a real transporting poetry.

Guru Tegh Bahadur compressed the entire esoteric and celestial teachings of the Gita and Upnishadas or the Vedanta and the Semitic Sufistic lore, unintelligible to common man in their original text and script, in his own wizardly comprehensible, day to day, language vibrant with true concept of the Immanent and the Transcendent Being. His own lived experience, subtlety of thought and perfection of detachment from the material glory indicate

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to the seekers after Truth the clear goal and the aim of existence on this decaying plane. For him man was not a puppet insentient object but the habitation of God in living sense and injury to him was an injury to his Indweller or his Maker. And he was a true *Shahid*-martyr, in its intrinsic sense, who stood a real witness to His Truth, Glory, Goodness and Greatness. He was a deathless genius whose name is immune from erosion of vagaries of Time and History.

Out of Guru Tegh Bahadur's 118 heart reaching and heart illuminating; weired and unearthly poetic utterances—Shabads and Shalokas enshrined in Sikh Scripture—Guru Granth Sahib—by his illustrious son and successor, Guru Gobind Singh and translated in English by this writer and reviewed as scholarly, permeated with devotion, sweetness and retention of mystic touch, a couple of them are reproduced below :

He who grieveth not in pain,
He who clingeth not to pleasure, and
He who brooketh no fear,
He who likeneth gold and muck as one (1-Pause)

He who swayeth not by slander and praise,
He who succumbeth not to greed, attachment and pride,
He who moveth not by grief and joy,
He who heedeth not for honour and dishonour (1)
He who renounceth all hopes and desires,
He who withdraweth from all affections earthly,
He who is untouched by lust and anger,
In him only dwelleth the Lord (2)
He on whom His Grace doth descend
Only he doth this life discipline imbibe.
Nanak is merged in Govinda
As water mingleth in water. (3-11)

Sans Hari's Name, pains one doth suffer,
Without devotion to Him
Ignorance leaveth one not,
This secret the Guru doth unveil (1-Pause)
What boot ore pilgrimage and fasts
If to Rama's refuge one doth noth not lie
Yogic feats, Yagnas art all profitless
When of Prabhu's praises one remaineth oblivious. (1)
He who shunning pride and attachment both
Chanteth paeans of Govinda
Sayeth Nanak, such a soul
Is Jivan Mukta called (1-2).

As the odour pervadeth the flower,
As the reflection dwelleth in the mirror,
In the likeness Hari permeateth in thy being
So search for Him within thyself.
When doing pilgrimage, fasts and charity
If one doth vainglorious go
Sayeth Nanak: In the likeness
of an elephant's bath
They shall all be profitless so.